

One alumnus' account of how his HC License Plate saved him...

## Guilty but Free!

By *Phil Mullins '72*

Earlier this year as I was departing Chicago in the wee morning hours for meetings on campus and in Madison, I saw a disturbing flashing light approaching rapidly from my rearview mirror shortly after turning onto the Indiana Toll Road. Then I heard the police siren and my first thought was, "How could my 13 year old Ford minivan be doing anything to strike the attention of the law?"

After pulling over, the officer, an Indiana State Patrolman, asked for my license and registration in standard fashion. He also inquired what speed I thought I was doing? I replied, 'I thought about 65?' He responded that it was just under 70. He added that although it was an interstate highway, the speed limit in that area was actually 55. I felt rather incompetent for not watching my speed more carefully, and for being caught in the act.

Further, I was struck by the irony of being stopped in a definitely unsexy vehicle of a certain age when I was a far easier target for the *gendarmes* years back in the heyday of my sports car years. Friends of mine were probably long-tired of my paean to middle age as I lamented stepping away from my youth when I shifted my automotive status from Maserati to minivan when our children arrived and required more practical daily transportation. What I was really most disturbed about was the fear that I might be late for the tea and conversation I was looking forward to sharing with President DeWine, scheduled for later that morning.

After a few anxious minutes, the officer came behind my van, stopped and looked closely at the license plate before approaching the window. The patrolman asked where I was headed today. I replied that I was on my way to Hanover and I was sorry if I was going a little too fast as I was anxious about arriving on time given the long drive. The officer told me that because I had a Hanover license plate, (HC 1972 for my class year), he was only giving me a warning as a gesture for supporting the Indiana college license plate program. He added that he knew it helped students throughout the state and asked me to watch my speed. To say the least, I was deeply relieved and touched by the officer's kindness for the rest of my drive.

Arriving on campus hours later, I recanted my story to Dr. DeWine and she thought it was a great tribute to the program, which it is. As a reformed speeder, I do mind the posted limits a little more carefully. Now I'm an even stronger proponent of Hanover College license plates and mindful that successful programs can have surprisingly positive attributes one would never have imagined! While there are many special lifelong benefits from being a Hanover graduate, this was one that made me extra proud, albeit in strange fashion.